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in Tertiary rocks in Australia, an announcement which of course created much surprise, since it had previously been an article of geological faith that belemnites were exclusively mesozoic fossils. Prof. McCoy now suggests that the fossil taken for a belemnite may have been the new Graphularia which he describes in the present decade, or some other very similar fossil. Another notable Victorian fossil noticed here for the first time is an eared seal of Pleistocene age, to which the name of *Arctocephalus williamsi* is given.—*Academy.*

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.

Geographical Notes.—The *Geographical Magazine* contains a map showing the Himalayan explorations of Mullah, one of the explorers of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India.——Dr. Kirchhoff, President of the Halle Geographical Society, has discovered, in the library of the University, a copy (apparently) of part of the original log book of Captain Cook, during his voyage in 1772. The book was bequeathed to the library referred to by John Reinhold Foster, Cook's companion, who died in Halle.——Lieut. Wyse at last accounts was exploring the Isthmus of San Blas, the narrowest point between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.——M. Deloncle of Lyons, concludes from documents in his hands, that (1) Lake Tanganyika was not known to be in existence at the time of the missionary journeys of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries; (2) that Mayamuezi, Ugogo, Uganda and other districts were known in the fourteenth century; (3) that Lakes Victoria and Albert Nyanza, Banguelo and Moero had been explored at the same time; (4) that the wide northern affluent of the Lualaba, discovered by Mr. Stanley, issues from the Albert Nyanza; (5) that Lake Nyanza was a basin, much larger than now——Dr. Traumuller of Leipzig, who resided at Batavia between 1867–1870, in the course of many excursions in the interior of Java, visited the volcanoes Gede and Panggerango, and the famous "Valley of Death." The carbonic acid gas which here accumulates to a height of two or three feet above the ground is noxious to small animals, but harmless to human beings. A former connection between Asia and Java appeared to the author to have once indubitably existed.——On the 6th of May, a little schooner, the *Willem Barents,* an eight ton craft, sailed from Amsterdam for a six months' cruise in the Arctic regions. The whole ship's company consists of fourteen—six scientific experts and eight sailors and officers. The enterprise is strictly national, foreign aid having been refused, and nothing even having been asked of the Dutch Government, but everything being supplied by voluntary contributions. The schooner will pursue the track of previous Dutch navigators, along the north-west coast of Spitzbergen, to Nova Zembla, and thence as far to the north-west as can be reached in season for the schooner to return before next winter.——The *Times* says the

Jeannette (*Pandora*) will be ready for sea in a short time, and then sail for Havre, where a temporary crew will be shipped, when she will leave for San Francisco. Mr. Bennett hopes the expedition will sail for the North in June, 1879. It will go by the route through Behring's Straits.——Prof. Nordenskiöld's expedition for the north-east passage sails in the *Vega*, in July.——The vessel *Eothen*, with twenty-five men, will sail from New York in July for the Arctic regions in search for the relics of Sir John Franklin.

MICROSCOPY.[1]

Determination of rocks by the Microscope.—At the regular meeting of the San Francisco Microscopical Society, May 16th, Mr. Melville Atwood presented twenty-two rock specimens illustrating a new method of preparing the same for determination, and read a very interesting paper on the subject. He is aware that looseness in petrological nomenclature is the rule and not the exception, and that many geologists are found writing of totally different rocks under the same name. But he is still more impressed with the ignorance of the miners in regard to the rocks which form the boundaries of the different mines. He does not value much any distinction between rocks which cannot be applied in the field, and he found, while making a collection of rock specimens prepared in different ways, that what was most wanted was a method to make it easy for his fellow-miners to understand and distinguish the enclosing and wall rocks of the different lodes they were working—these rocks having so much to do with the productiveness of the lodes. To prepare rocks so that they can be easily studied with a pocket lens or a low power of the microscope and accurately identified by comparison with a collection of foreign types, they are prepared as follows: "First wash the specimen clean, using a brush to get rid of any clay and dirt; then select the side or part you wish to examine, and grind it down on a piece of sandstone (a shoemaker's sharpening stone) until a perfectly flat surface is obtained. This will occupy but a few minutes unless the rock is very hard. The surface should then be worked down still finer with a square emery file, using water, and after you have obtained a sufficient polish, wash the rock again and then let it dry gradually, either on a stove or, what is better still, a little brass table with a spirit lamp, the same that is used for heating slides. When perfectly dry heat it again to a point so that you can barely handle it; then varnish the polished side while hot with a mixture of one part of Canada balsam to three parts of alcohol, which must be warmed before applying it, and laid on with a camel's hair brush. It will soon dry, and if left for a day or two will harden, so that you can handle it without injury." This simple and rough treatment is

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[1] This department is edited by Dr. R. H. Ward, Troy, N. Y.